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## INTUITION.

A. BARRATT BROWN.

A FORM of knowledge that transcends our ordinary thinking and yields a completer grasp of a fuller and more real object is the ideal of philosophy, as it is the confident claim of religious mysticism. Such a grasp of reality seems to imply a closer and more direct relation between the thinker and his object than ordinary experience and ordinary reflection on experience can effect. Hence, the professed or would-be possessor of such vision tends to disparage the lower levels of experience and thinking, and even to oppose their methods and results to those which he himself can claim.

It is the purpose of this paper to attempt to show how such an ideal form of apprehension may be not only not antagonistic to the more ordinary work of thought, but even in some degree implied and presupposed in the prior stages of experience and thinking. The actual claims to possess the full measure of such ideal experience I have not attempted to submit to examination. The language of mystics and seers in which they report their vision does not, indeed, readily admit of either refutation or corroboration by the student of the theory of knowledge. Their testimonies to such experience are full of vivid and suggestive symbolism, rich in metaphor and poetry; but their attempted analysis of the same is vague and clumsy, and largely limited to negatives that contrast its character with that of inferior levels of thought. So they speak of an ‘immediate,’ an ‘infinite’ or ‘untrammeled,’ or even an ‘ineffable’ experience, as theirs. Let us turn instead to the ideal of knowledge that is suggested in the works of philosophers, and recall four expressions of the same,—two in ancient and two in modern philosophy.

1. Let me first instance Plato’s discussion (at the close

of Book VI of the “*Republic*” and in the “*Philebus*”) of the ascending levels of apprehension that correspond to ascending levels of reality. He takes, as we remember, a continuous line, divided into four sections, to represent the stages of intelligence leading up to perfect knowledge. The two main divisions of the line are into *δέξα*, on the one hand, and *ἐπιστήμη*, on the other; and *δέξα*, again, is divided into *εἰκασία* and *πίστις*, and *ἐπιστήμη* into *διάνοια* and *νόησις*. It is irrelevant to our present purpose to analyze the conceptions of *εἰκασία* and *πίστις*, the lower grades of apprehension confined more or less to dealings with the visible and external world of appearance. But the upper half of the two main sections, *ἐπιστήμη*, is divided into two orders of experience; one, that of *διάνοια*, or the understanding, and the other, that of *νόησις*, or *ἐπιστήμη* proper, which is, avowedly, an ideal of knowledge.

There comes a stage in the development of thought when the first certitude (*πίστις*) of *prima facie* experience,—reliance, for example, on the evidence of the senses,—is broken down by the obvious contradictions engendered. *διάνοια* corresponds to the scientific attitude which begins to seek for laws and governing principles which may serve to render more orderly and intelligible this world of our first experience. But *διάνοια* still uses the sensible objects as symbols, and, moreover, assumes as ultimate and self-evident certain *ὑποθέσεις* or *ἀρχαι* (first principles) as starting-points of demonstration. Each of the sciences will start from such supposed independent *ἀρχαι*, arithmetic from number, geometry from space, and so forth. But we cannot remain in these separate departments of thinking. The demand for unity urges us on to a more coherent and synthetic account of the whole reality as an ordered system or *κόσμος*. This is the ideal of *νόησις*, which would see everything in the light of its relation to the whole system, or as related to what Plato would call “the Form of the Good.” The means by which we may gain this unified vision Plato calls *διαλεκτική*, by which he also names later the ideal of knowledge it-

self. And the man who is progressively exercising such a method, coördinating more and more the whole range of his experience, is called *συνοπτικός*.

2. I would turn next to the last section of Aristotle's "Posterior Analytics,"—to a passage that is admittedly obscure, but which I think suggests an interesting parallel to Plato's famous account of the ascent of knowledge.<sup>1</sup> Aristotle has been examining the nature and methods of *ἐπιστήμη*, or demonstrative science. Such *ἐπιστήμη*, he pointed out at the beginning, is based on certain ultimate first principles, or *ἀρχαί*, which are assumed at the start by each branch of inquiry, and which he calls immediate (*άμεσα*) and undemonstrable (*ἀναπόδεικτα*).

But then the question presents itself: How are these known to us? And his answer is that they are known to us in virtue of a certain *δύναμις* which represents the urge or *nitus* toward the unity of knowledge. This yields us at every stage in the scale of experience a gradual order of universals. Even the earliest animal *αἰσθητός* yields a primary sort of universal (*ὅλον τι*). But *αἰσθητός* gives rise to memory, and memory to *ἐμπειρία*, which becomes more and more ordered as we advance. And that in virtue of a necessary principle of order (*νόος*) which is a power of universalizing and coördinating our experience. (*Cf.* Kant's "synthetic unity of apperception.")

This belongs essentially to the nature of mind or soul. Aristotle illustrates his meaning by the figure of a rout during a battle, in which first one man comes to a stand, and then another, until the first order of arrangement is reached. So, he says, it is with the gradual reduction to order of the chaos of experience, from the first fixing of the universals of the particular sense-objects to the final attainment of the ultimate universal or undivided whole, the true individual. Clearly, then, he adds, we can only come to know the primary truths of science by

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<sup>1</sup> My interpretation of the passage is largely indebted to notes of a lecture by Mr. Sidney Ball.

induction (*ἐπαγωγή*). And complementary to such induction is the process of demonstration or deduction (*ἀπόδειξις* or *ἐπιστήμη*) that goes back over the whole range of experience and shows the universal operating throughout. And, as Aristotle says, in the last words of the book, "the whole state of the mind (including both *νοῦς* and *ἐπιστήμη*) corresponds to the whole fact."

I would briefly add to these two ancient theories two more modern statements of the advance of knowledge.

3. Spinoza in his treatise "De Intellectus Emendatione," and more fully in Part II of the "Ethica," develops a gradation of knowledge from the less to the more adequate. The lowest grade is represented by opinion and imagination,—corresponding to vague experience and hearsay. But there are two higher grades that give a greater measure of truth. Of these he calls the first *ratio* and the second *scientia intuitiva*. *Ratio* corrects and completes ordinary casual perception,—arrives at an understanding of the laws of things,—and so achieves a relatedness that may be said to be a knowledge of things *sub quadam specie aeternitatis*. But *scientia intuitiva* corrects and completes the work of *ratio*, and yields a more unified and concrete apprehension. It is no longer the "idea of the body," nor even of the laws of things, but the idea or intuitive apprehension of God himself, and of all things in God,—*sub specie aeternitatis*. And this at its fullest is the *amor intellectualis Dei*.

4. Finally, let me recall Hegel's development of the process of thought from primitive picture-thinking (*Vorstellung*) to the rigid classification of the understanding (*Verstand*), and from this again by the action of dialectic to the rational Notion,—the speculative grasp or *Begriff*. This he also calls Speculative or Positive Reason (*Vernunft*) and compares with the *intuitio intellectualis* of the mystics. But the highest reach of apprehension is so far from being contrasted with the ordinary activity of thought that it is its very ideal and comple-

tion. Moreover, it is an ideal grasp that is only attained by long experience and hard thinking on experience.

It is here that Hegel came to deal severe criticism to the claims of Intuition made by Schelling,—criticism that is concentrated in that famous preface to the “*Phänomenologie des Geistes*,” in which he ridicules the proud pretensions of genius with its high flashes of thought,—“These rockets are not the empyrean, . . .”—and contrasts the fine sentiments and deliverances of such Intuition striding its royal road in its high priestly vestments with the laborious and patient process of plain hard thinking in its dressing-gown.

Along with which we may set the passage in the “*Logik*”<sup>2</sup> in which Hegel distinguishes the first harmony of the naïve and primitive experience of childhood from the “second harmony” which “must spring from the labor and culture of the mind.” “It is a mistake to regard the natural and immediate harmony as the right state (to rest in). The mind is not mere instinct: on the contrary, it essentially involves the tendency to reasoning and meditation. Childlike innocence undoubtedly has in it much that is sweet and attractive, but only because it reminds us of what the mind must win for itself. The harmonious existence of childhood is a gift from the hand of nature: the second harmony must spring from the labor and culture of the mind.”

At this point I would like to traverse certain recent tendencies which would seem to introduce a dangerous confusion between the ideal of knowledge of which we have been speaking and that first immediacy which belongs to the lowest levels of experience. The late Professor James understood the arguments of M. Bergson to imply an appeal to “dive back into the flux” of sensible experience,—“to turn our faces toward sensation.” (*Hibbert Journal*, April, 1909.) And many less distinguished followers of M. Bergson have been asking us to

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<sup>2</sup> Wallace’s translation, p. 55.

repudiate the traditional methods of thinking, and return to the primitive, unthinking experience of the child. A kindred movement in art seeks to regain, in one of the post-impressionist phrases, "the synthetic outlook of childhood." One is reminded of Bacon's comparison of the conditions of entering the kingdom of knowledge with those of entering the kingdom of Heaven,—"whereinto none may enter except as a little child." But, as Hegel remarks in the passage of the "*Logik*" quoted just now, "the words '*except ye become as little children*' . . . are very far from telling us that we must *remain children*."

It is necessary, indeed, at the start to *become* as a child, in the sense of unlearning our sophisticated pre-judgments, but we cannot stay in the first unthinking and inarticulate experience of childhood,—where, as Professor James himself admits, "the world is one big, buzzing, blooming confusion." Into that confusion of primitive and puerile experience,—of crude sensation,—we have by hard thinking to introduce order, as into the ranks of that routed army of Aristotle's figure.

But the futility of the labors of our thought is proclaimed to us on every hand in the present-day *flair* for the irrational. We are asked to repudiate the indirect and discursive methods of mediate thinking in favor of a sort of 'direct action,' such as in the political sphere the Syndicalist would substitute for the (to him) circuitous and futile methods of legislation. And what is the alternative mode of apprehension that is put before us? By an effort of 'intellectual sympathy' we are to project ourselves into the 'very life of things,'— to 'install ourselves in that which is moving.' Those are the actual phrases of M. Bergson's "*Introduction to Metaphysics*," and they are easily perverted into a crude sensationalism.

For, literally to follow this method would be to commit intellectual suicide and to find ourselves stultified at the start. We cannot,—if we would,—return to the primi-

tive and blurred immediacy of the child and the savage. Or if we make the attempt, we must be content to be inarticulate. Neither can we attain greater clarity of vision and comprehension by a futile effort to install ourselves in the life of our surroundings. "How few of us know what it would be like to be a triangle!" Nettleship is said to have once exclaimed, and the humorous suggestion may serve as a *reductio ad absurdum* of the plea that we have been examining.

But we cannot suppose that M. Bergson means us to take his words quite so literally, though his own followers are among the first to do so. What, then, does he mean by this effort of 'intellectual sympathy,' which he terms *Intuition?* It is by no means clearer when he explains that it is "instinct that has become self-conscious, capable of reflecting upon its object, and of enlarging it definitely,"—a vague and meaningless if not misleading analogy which has to add to the known character of instinct precisely that of which it is least capable.

But we are not surprised to find that this 'intuition' requires arduous effort. That, indeed, we had been ready to surmise of any ideal approach to reality,—as was in fact suggested in Hegel's treatment of the Notion and the 'second harmony.' M. Bergson speaks, then, of "a laborious, even painful, effort to remount the slope of the work of thought, in order to place oneself directly, by a kind of intellectual expansion, within the thing studied: in short a passage from reality to concepts, and no longer from concepts to reality." We are, it seems, "to remount,"—we are to "invert the habitual direction of the work of thought." To which we may reply, that we agree that premature syntheses are fatally frequent, but that we consider that the fault derives not from the intrinsic character of our concepts as so far developed, but from the incompleteness of their development.

It is, however, natural to disparage and discount the lower stages of the thinking process. Hegel himself deals some hard blows to the understanding, which is

yet a “dead self” by which we rise to higher things. But surely, it is only by an abstraction that we can speak of a purely analytic and discursive and mediate process. Mr. Bradley, following Hegel, has sufficiently established the interdependence of analysis and synthesis in all judgment. Similarly, it is an abstraction to speak of ‘mediate’ as opposed to ‘immediate’ experience. We know everything by means and in the light of something else. Experience does not come to us pure and direct,—it takes the shape and color of the time and place and temper of the subject.

“like the dyer’s hand  
Subdu’d to what it works in.”

Immediate knowledge, then, is as much an abstraction as purely mediate knowledge. “What is true,” says Hegel, “is their unity, an immediate knowledge which is likewise mediated, something mediated which is likewise simple in itself, which is immediate reference to itself.” (“Philosophy of Religion,” Eng. trans., I, 58.) We may compare the conclusion of a syllogism, which is essentially mediated, but which is grasped in itself and as a whole,—*uno intuitu*,—and forms what Professor Bosanquet calls “an immediate apprehension which is the totality of a mediate discourse.”<sup>3</sup>

Now, there is nothing necessarily inconsistent with this in the process which M. Bergson describes in his final illustration of his meaning in the “Introduction”:”<sup>4</sup>

In conclusion, we may remark that there is nothing mysterious in this faculty. Every one of us has had occasion to exercise it to a certain extent. Any one of us, for instance, who has attempted literary composition, knows that when the subject has been studied at length, the materials all collected, and the notes all made, something more is needed in order to set about the work of composition itself, and that is an often very painful effort to place ourselves directly at the heart of the subject, and to seek as deeply as possible an impulse, after which we need only let ourselves go. This impulse, once received, starts the mind on a path where it rediscovers

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<sup>3</sup> “Principle of Individuality and Value,” I., p. 65.

<sup>4</sup> “Introduction to Metaphysics,” tr. T. E. Hulme, pp. 76, 77.

all the information it had collected, and a thousand other details besides; it develops and analyzes itself into terms which could be enumerated indefinitely. The farther we go, the more terms we discover; we shall never say all that could be said, and yet, if we turn back suddenly upon the impulse that we feel behind us, and try to seize it, it is gone; for it was not a thing, but the direction of a movement, and though indefinitely extensible, it is infinitely simple. Metaphysical intuition seems to be something of the same kind. What corresponds here to the documents and notes of literary composition is the sum of observations and experience gathered together by positive science. For we do not obtain an intuition from reality,—that is, an intellectual sympathy with the most intimate part of it,—unless we have won its confidence by a long fellowship with its superficial manifestations.

Mr. Lindsay, in commenting on this illustration,<sup>5</sup> compares the famous passage in Plato's Seventh Letter,—on the inadequacy of written treatises. I should like to quote the earlier part of the passage to which Mr. Lindsay refers. Plato is explaining that knowledge demands time and practice ( $\tauριβή$ ).<sup>6</sup>

It is only in consequence of a reciprocal friction of them all,—names, discourses ( $\lambda\gammaοι$ -definitions), visual and other perceptions (diagrams, etc.) with one another, and the testing of them by kindly examination and question and answer (dialectic), practised in no spirit of vainglory (like eristic),—that the light of sound judgment ( $\phiρόνησις$ ) and comprehension ( $νοῦς$ ) flashes out on the various problems with all the intensity permitted to human nature.

It is only from a long-continued personal association in the business and a common life that suddenly, as it were, the fire leaps up and kindles a spiritual flame which thenceforth feeds itself.

Here we have full emphasis laid on the mediation of experience and the mutual give-and-take of dialectic fellowship which seems to me to correct the Bergsonian assumption that the clearest and surest knowledge is that of our own personality. Rather, as Aristotle says, we have a clearer vision of our neighbors than we can attain of ourselves, and at any rate we can only understand ourselves by understanding others. Similarly, we must guard against the idea that the ‘intellectual sym-

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<sup>5</sup> A. D. Lindsay, “Philosophy of Bergson,” p. 239.

<sup>6</sup> See article by A. E. Taylor, *Mind*, July, 1912.

pathy,' which M. Bergson desiderates, is to be attained by complete immersion in the object. Not so, surely, can any knowledge make advance. We speak of identifying ourselves with the thing or person that we come to know and love, but such identification is not complete absorption.

A truer view of such a sympathy seems to me to be suggested in Professor Bosanquet's treatment of the "penetrative imagination" and in the illuminating account of "Interest," to which he himself refers us in the "Remains" of R. L. Nettleship. Nettleship describes that increasing intimacy of experience which produces a literal 'interest' or 'being in' the object, and which yet maintains the distinction of the knower and the known. Equally suggestive is his remark on the growth of our experience. "Growth of experience," he says, "its becoming more, may thus be represented as growth of structure, or a process in which we come to be more 'constructive,' to put more together, to find more in things, to get more out of them."<sup>7</sup>

Now, some such growth and expansion of thought and knowledge is what this paper has endeavored to suggest as being not a break with our ordinary thought and account of experience,—not an inversion of rational procedure,—but an expansion and completion of the labor of the intellect. Such a grasp or comprehension is that of the *συνοπτικός*, who sees things as a whole. And the grasp itself may well be called *σύνοψις*, or, if I may coin the word, *contuition*. It is, indeed, what M. Bergson terms "integral experience." Of course, it is the ideal rather than the actual attainment of our knowledge, but it is, as I suggested, foreshadowed and implied in the most elementary procedure of thought. M. Bergson himself is more careful than some of his followers to show how hard and distant its attainment must be,—at any rate,

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<sup>7</sup> "Philosophical Remains," p. 16. What we call 'putting two and two together' is the gist of a certain grasp of a situation as a whole which is often termed 'intuition.'

as a secured possession of more than an instant's glimpse, and, in fact, his suggestion of its perfected scope in the "Evolution créatrice" is "a consummation devoutly to be wished," but which "the imagination boggles at." "Intuition," he says, "if it could be prolonged beyond a few instants, would not only make the philosopher agree with his own thought, but also all philosophers with each other."<sup>8</sup>

The intuition, indeed, that comes and goes on the instant is rather the vague forefeeling of the grasp that we have spoken of,—and it is, I would suggest, such a vague forefeeling to which most people give the name. We might instance the feeling of the whole that we experience throughout the hearing of a drama, a sonata, or a poem,—or the feeling of unity in the acquaintance of friendship or religion. And all such experiences we speak of as fulfilling their own logic,—the logical spirit being, as Professor Bosanquet suggests, always the spirit of totality.<sup>9</sup>

This, then, is the earnest and presumption in our own limited experience of that ideal of absolute knowledge which I have called *contuition*, and which is no less implied in our ordinary thought because it is fully unattainable as yet. Our own knowledge is admittedly "in part,"—"through a glass, darkly." But our knowledge of the parts is conditioned by and grows along with our progressive knowledge of the whole, and the increase of our understanding of the "flower in the crannied wall" is the measure of the increase of our understanding of God and man. Complete knowledge would, indeed, be a knowledge of all things in God—Spinoza's *amor intellectualis Dei*. "Interest at its highest power," says Nettleship,<sup>10</sup> "is love, and if we could take an interest in all things, we should be on the way to love all things; and this means to 'be in' all things or make all things our

<sup>8</sup> "Creative Evolution," Engl. tr., p. 252.

<sup>9</sup> "Principle of Individuality and Value," I., p. 23. Cf. Aristotle's *vōdē*.

<sup>10</sup> "Philosophical Remains," p. 17.

own, which is God." In so far as we see things no longer partially, but in the light of their relation to the whole, so far we may be said to grasp the whole,—to possess the *σύνοψις* which is *Intuition*.

A. BARRATT BROWN.

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## THE DOCTRINE OF CONSEQUENCES IN ETHICS.

C. D. BROAD.

THE opinion that the rightness of an act is in some way connected with the goodness or badness of its consequences is, I suppose, held by everyone in practice and by most moralists in theory. If we only listen to what people *say* instead of also noticing how they act and judge, we might be inclined to underrate the amount of agreement on this point. Nothing is commoner than such phrases as 'you must never do evil that good may come,' which, if they mean anything, imply that some acts are wrong, however good their consequences. Yet, in practice, people who quote this maxim and also believe that pain is an evil do not, as they ought to do, shun their dentists as moral lepers. Again, there is no doubt that commonsense thinks motives important as well as consequences, but it would reject the Kantian view that they are all-important, and that only one kind of motive is morally valuable.

But at this point agreement ceases. Are consequences the sole relevant factor in judging the rightness of an act; or do other factors enter, and, in particular, are some acts right and some wrong, whatever their consequences? Again, is it the actual or the probable consequences that are ethically relevant? And further, if you decide to include motives in judging the rightness of an act, is the question whether the act is the immediate response of a good nature or results only as the consequence of a moral struggle, of ethical importance? The